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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CHENGDU 000117

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SUBJECT: TIBETAN TEACHER ON PACIFYING KHAM BY JOBS AND EDUCATION

REF: A. CHENGDU 115

[1](#)B. 08 CHENGDU 135

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CLASSIFIED BY: James A. Boughner, Consul General, U.S. Consulate General, Chengdu.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: According to an ethnic Tibetan teacher from Aba Prefecture in western Sichuan Province, government job programs begun there over the past few years aim to give young people something to lose so they think twice about "stirring up trouble." A new program that will send ten thousand ethnic Tibetan middle school graduates per year to high schools outside of Tibetan areas is another strategy aimed at keeping peace by equipping youth for jobs through vocational training. The teacher described how his brother, a monk, was tracked down and detained by police after taking photographs of demonstrations that were released on the Internet. Satellite dishes are reportedly being removed in parts of Aba to prevent people from listening to VOA and RFA Tibetan language programs broadcast by satellite. End summary.

Tibetan Students to be sent to Han Areas of Sichuan

[1](#)2. (C) A former Tibetan middle school teacher, who now lives in Chengdu, told us recently that a new program developed over the past four months to send ten thousand students from the predominantly Tibetan prefectures of Aba and Ganzi (ref A) is not yet widely known to Tibetan parents. Some Tibetan teachers, however, are already preparing for the move to the new schools now under construction in the earthquake hit areas of Dujiangyan and Wenchuan. Tibetan students are to be sent to many different schools, including special programs for Tibetans within existing schools, as well as to new schools. According to the teacher, students will not be sent to Chengdu in order to mitigate the possible influence of Chengdu Tibetans who hold "politically incorrect" ideas. In the teacher's home county of Aba in Aba Prefecture, 70 percent of middle school graduates will be sent away for high school this September. The proportion will be roughly 40 percent in two nearby Aba Prefecture counties.

[1](#)3. (C) The teacher remarked the new program may have been inspired by perceived recent successes in his home county of Aba, a center of Tibetan culture, which has been relatively quiet in comparison to other Tibetan areas. Over the past several years, local authorities have been reaching out to unemployed youth in their twenties offering many of them jobs and a few years of vocational training in Chinese speaking parts of Sichuan. Once they have jobs, the government assumes, the young people will have something to lose, and so are less likely to cause trouble. The education strategy, the teacher asserted,

is aimed at weakening Tibetan culture. Although this makes Tibetans angry, there is not much they can do about it.

14. (C) The teacher commented it is possible the Chinese government strategy will meet with some success. Wenchuan County, where some of the Aba County Tibetan students are being sent, used to be a Tibetan area but now local Tibetans have assimilated to Han culture. Several years ago, Tibetans schools in Aba County started teaching mathematics and science in Tibetan rather than in Chinese. Tibetan students there have been doing much better in math and science as a result. (Note: poor training in math and science is viewed as a big problem in the education of Tibetans in China, leaving them with few options for higher education). The teacher fears that this success of Tibetan language education will be lost when students are sent to study in high schools in Chinese speaking areas of Sichuan.

Monk Brother Pursued by Police for Photos

15. (C) The teacher described how he was raised in a family of thirteen, including the six children of his parents and four children of his eldest brother. His youngest brother is a monk. It is very common for at least one of the boys of Tibetan families in Aba to become monks. The teacher's monk brother took pictures during incidents of recent unrest and gave them to someone who sent the pictures abroad via the Internet. The police caught the man who sent the pictures overseas and subsequently sentenced him to thirteen years in prison. Then, the police began looking for his brother who fled his monastery and went into hiding. The police even called the teacher in Chengdu to ask him where his brother had gone -- the teacher replied he didn't know anything.

16. (C) After the abbot of his brother's monastery intervened, the teacher continued, the police made an agreement that they

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would let his brother go free after interrogating him. His brother surrendered himself to the police and the teacher hopes he will be released soon. Security authorities have been focusing great attention on the Kham areas of traditional Tibet -- Ganzi and Aba Prefectures of Sichuan Province -- in the wake of the March 2008 Tibetan areas protests. The teacher speculated this is because of an old Chinese strategy -- "To rule Tibet, first pacify Kham" (zhi zang, bi xian an kang) which apparently dates back to military campaigns in the Kang region of what is today western Sichuan during the early Qing Dynasty. (Comment: Ganzi Prefecture officials now refer to this in a modernized version "To stabilize Tibet, first pacify Kang" (wen zang, bi xian an kang) probably, at least in part, as a way to campaign for additional resources from the central government).

Satellite Antennas Coming Down in Aba County

17. (C) Satellite antennas, the teacher noted, are being confiscated all over his home area of Aba. He remarked, "we used to listen to hear the Dalai Lama sometimes on Radio Free Asia on the satellite." (Note: Radio Free Asia and Voice of America broadcasts are carried on a digital audio on the Asiasat 3 satellite which can be received throughout China). The satellite dishes are being replaced by cable television systems that will carry only government-approved programming.

Kham Carrot and Stick

18. (C) Comment: It is possible that one lesson from the March 2008 outbreak of unrest in Lhasa for Chinese authorities was that massive investment and rapid development, absent the software of education to make local people competitive for jobs, resulted in a flood of outside workers that only heightened ethnic tensions. Substantial infrastructure investments are

currently being made in Sichuan Province's predominantly Tibetan prefectures of Ganzi (ref B) and Aba that will inevitably result in much greater contact with Han Chinese. Implementing a massive scholarship system for Tibetan ethnic middle school graduates appears to be one strategy of trying to pacify these areas as they experience potentially dramatic change.

BOUGHNER